THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANANRTHANAN): (a) to (c) The entire customs duty structure was reviewed as part of the budget exercise for 1999-2000. No specific proposal is under the consideration of the Government to give duty benefits to farmers and agriculturists for introduction of products not available in the country and used by them.

कीमतों में वृद्धि

2218. **श्री चीमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ला:**

क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या पोखरण में नार्भिकीय परीक्षण किए जाने के पश्चात् देश की आर्थिक स्थिति अत्यन्त ही नाजुक हो गई है और इसके परिणामस्वरूप मंहगाई आसमान को छूने लगी है;

(ख) क्या सरकार ने देश की आर्थिक स्थिति की समीक्षा की है और बढ़ती हुई कीमतों का भी आकलन किया है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो सरकार द्वारा इस स्थिति से निपटने के लिए क्या उपाय किये गये है; और

(घ) विगत आठ माह के दौरान मूल्य-वृद्धि दर कितनी दर्ज की गई?

वित्त मंत्री (श्री यशवन्त सिन्हा): (क) जी, नहीं।

(ख) और (ग) जी, हां। आपूर्ति में गिरावट के कारण कुछ आवश्यक वस्तुओं की कीमतों में तीव्र वृद्धि के बावजूद समग्र मूल्य स्थिति सन्तोषजनक बनी रही है। सरकार ने मुद्रास्फीति को कम रखने के लिए अनेक उपाय किए हैं। टी०डी०पी०एस० के ज़रिए खाद्यान्नों की आपूर्ति को सुनिश्चित करने के अतिरिक्त, राज्यों को खुले बाजार में बिक्री के लिए गेहूं की अतिरिक्त मात्रा आवंटित की गई। खाद्य तेलों, दालों आदि जैसी आवश्यक वस्तुओं की घरेलू आपूर्ति को बढ़ाने के लिए एक उदार व्यापार नीति अमल में लाई जा रही है। सरकार ने एक राष्ट्रीय फसल पूर्वानुमान केन्द्र, आवश्यक वस्तुओं की कीमतों को मॉनीटर करने के लिए एक उच्चाधिकार प्राप्त मॉनीटरिंग बोर्ड, वस्तुओं की कीमतों और उनकी उपलब्धता स्थिति की पुनरीक्षा करने के लिए राज्यों की भागीदारी युक्त एक संयुक्त मॉनीटरिंग समिति की भी स्थापना की है। बजट 1999-2000 में शीतागारों और गोदामों के निर्माण के लिए एक नई ऋण से जुड़ी पूंजी सब्सिडी योजना की घोषणा की गई है।

(घ) पिछले आठ महीनों के दौरान थोक मूल्यों पर आधारित वार्षिक मूल्य वृद्धि इस प्रकार थी:—

महीना	*वार्षिक वृद्धि (प्रतिशत)*
जून	7.5
जुलाई	8.3
अगस्त	8.3
सितम्बर	8.5
अक्तूबर	8.3
नवम्बर	8.1
दिसम्बर	6.3
जनवरी	4.6*
फरवरी	5.0*

* अनन्तिम

Reduction in excise and hike in import duty on steel

2219. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased and state:

(a) whether the Ministery of Steel and Mines has urged to reduce excise duty and hike import duty on steel items to end sluggishness in the sector;

(b) whether the above demands would help the steel industry to increase their output capacities; and

(c) if so, the measures taken to fully utilise the installed capacities of steel plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) Duty structure is one of the several factors affecting output capacities.

(c) Several measures have been taken

to improve capacity utilisation in the integrated steel plants. They are:—

(i) modernisation and technical upgradation of the plants;

(ii) improving techno-economic factors, i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption; and

(iii) effective maintenance of plant and machinery.

Government has also taken several measures recently to make Indian steel competitive which is expected to result in better capacity utlisation, these include launching of a National Campaign to boost demand and consumption of steel, reduction in import duty on certain raw materials, levy of anti-dumping duty and fixing of floor prices on import of certain flat products, rationalisation of Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates to enhance steel exports etc.

Duty Drawback Racket

2220. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has unearthed a duty drawback racket involving a fraud amounting to crores of rupees as per the PTI, Mumbai report appearing in the National dailies;

(b) if so, the details of the culprits involved therein and the modus operandi followed and the amount involved in the fraudulent drawback;

(c) the amount already disbursed frauduently; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to detect and check the recurrence of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANANRTHANAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has unearthed a duty drawback racket involving a fraud amounting to crores of ruppes as per the PTI Mumbai report which appeared in the Indian Express dated 15.2.1999 (Mumbai Edition)

(b) Names of the firms involved in the said fraud are as under:

(1) M/s. Himgiri Overseas
(2) M/s. Saharanpur Handicrafts
(3) M/s. Stitch and Style
(4) M/s. Deepshika Overseas
(5) M/s. R & S Company

The modus operandi followed in the fraud was to export/attempt to export old and used clothes and clothes of very inferior a quality at high prices for availing excessive drawback. The amount of drawback fraudulently claimed in this fraud is approximately Rs. 7.41 crores.

(c) The amount of drawback already disbursed in this fraud is Rs. 3.87 crores. Concerned Commissioner of Customs has been instructed to stop disbursement of further drawback. It was found that an amount of Rs. 1.23 crores was lying in the credit of one of the firms involved in this fraud in the bank account through which drawback was disbursed. This amount has been frozen and the bank has been instrsucted not to allow further withdrawals from this account.

(d) the following steps have been taken to prevent recurrence of such frauds:

(i) Three Superintenaents and two Inspectors who were concerned with the examination of the goods involoved in the fraud have been suspended. The concerned supervisory officers have also been transferred.

(ii) The examination procedure has been tightened for consignments meant for sensitive destinations and cumputer software has been developed to allocate examining officers without human intervention.